

Record of the 64th Congress

An Associated Press dispatch, dated Washington, Sept. 8, says: The first session of the Sixty-fourth congress which adjourned today was concerned chiefly with national issues.

The crisis in congress over the international situation followed Germany's naval order to sink armed belligerent merchant ships without warning. Introduction of resolutions warning Americans to keep off armed merchantmen caused President Wilson to halt diplomatic negotiations and go to the capitol to demand a showdown.

The result was the tabling of the Gore resolution in the senate by a vote of 64 to 18 on March 3, and of the McLemore resolution in the house by a vote of 276 to 142 on March 7. Immediately afterwards the President sent to Germany and read to congress a note threatening to sever diplomatic relations unless the German government "immediately effected a modification of its methods of submarine warfare."

When the gavel fell congress had directed reorganization and re-equipment of the army and navy for defense of the country at the unprecedented cost of \$655,000,000, with authorizations that will increase the total in three years to nearly \$800,000,000. With all other expenditures, appropriations were brought to the grand total of \$1,637,583,682, the greatest aggregate in the country's history and exceeding that for the last fiscal year by more than half a billion dollars.

Expenditures, necessitated by preparedness and the calling into action of military forces to meet the Mexican emergency demanded revenue legislation in the closing days of the session. Congress responded by doubling the normal tax on incomes, creating an inheritance tax, munitions tax and miscellaneous excise taxes to raise \$205,000,000 and by directing sale of \$130,000,000 Panama canal bonds.

Congress established a tariff commission, a government shipping board to rehabilitate the American merchant marine, a workman's compensation commission to administer a new uniform compensation law, a farm loan banking system, a child labor law, enlarged the system of self-government in the Philippines and enacted many other important laws which had been contemplated by the administration.

The session was disturbed throughout by frequently recurring threats of foreign complications from the European war and imminence at one time of a diplomatic break with Germany; interference with American mails and commerce, invasion of American soil and killing of Americans by Mexican bandits and danger of actual war with Mexico.

Later in the session trouble arose in the senate over the nomination of Louis D. Brandeis, of Boston, to succeed the late Justice Lamar as a member of the supreme court. Weeks of investigation and deliberation by the judiciary committee ended in confirmation of Mr. Brandeis by a large majority.

In the week before adjournment, congress was occupied with legislation which prevented a threatened nation-wide strike. President Wilson after futile negotiations with officials of the railroads and railroad brotherhoods submitted the controversy to congress to prevent the strike and to prevent such emergencies from arising in the future.

After a week of consideration, during which the President visited the capitol daily, conferring with administration leaders, a bill was passed to establish an eight-hour day as a basis for pay of railroad work-

ers, the present rate of pay for ten hours work not to be reduced and the men to receive pro rata pay for work in excess of eight hours pending an investigation by a railroad commission into the effect of the eight-hour day on railroad revenues.

Important Legislation

Most important legislative enactments of the session, exclusive of laws for national defense, included the following:

Government ship law: Appropriating \$50,000,000 to operate ships in foreign and coastwise trade when unable to lease them to individuals or private corporations.

Child labor law: Denying interstate commerce to products of mines and quarries employing children under 16 years of age and factories, mills, canneries and other establishments employing children under 14 years.

Rural credits law: Establishing a farm loan board in control of a system of farm loan mortgage banks.

Workmen's compensation law: Providing uniform sick and accident benefits for employes of the federal government and benefits to dependents in case of death.

Emergency revenue law: Providing for doubling the normal income tax on the lowest class; making additional surtax ranging from 1 per cent on that portion of incomes exceeding \$20,000 to 13 per cent on amount of incomes in excess of \$2,000,000; levying a graduated tax of 1 per cent on inheritances ranging from \$50,000 to \$5,000,000; a 10 per cent net profit tax on manufactures of munitions, 5 per cent net-profit tax on manufacturers of materials entering into munitions; a license tax on actually invested capital stock of corporations capitalized at more than \$99,000; wine, beer and liquor excise taxes and miscellaneous stamp taxes.

Good roads law: Providing for cooperative federal aid to the states for construction of highways and appropriating \$75,000,000 to be spent in five years.

Postal savings law: Amendment increasing the amount which individuals may deposit from \$500 to \$1,000 with interest and an additional \$1,000 without interest.

Federal reserve: Amendments, including amendment to the Clayton anti-trust law permitting officers and directors of member banks to become officers and directors of not more than two other non-competing banks; amendments permitting national banks to establish foreign branches, liberalizing regulations for discounting commercial paper and permitting member banks in towns of 5,000 or less population to act as agents for insurance companies.

Railroad legislation: Creation of a joint sub-committee of senate and house interstate commerce committees to investigate necessity for further legislation for railroads and the interstate commerce commission, question of government ownership of public utilities and comparative worth of government ownership as against government regulation.

Tariff: Creation of a non-partisan revision; repeal of the free sugar provision of existing tariff law; amendments increasing duties on dyestuffs to encourage manufacturing dyestuffs in the United States; enactment of an anti-dumping provision to prevent dumping of foreign made goods at less than foreign market prices; authorization of the President to retaliate against foreign nations prohibiting importation of goods from the United States by laying an embargo against imports from offending nations.

Cotton futures act: Providing a prohibitive tax on cotton sold for fu-

ture delivery in fictitious or wash sales.

Philippines: Law to provide for a more autonomous government of the islands, enlarging self government, reorganizing election laws, establishing an elective senate and promising independence whenever, in the judgment of the United States the Philippine people demonstrate capability for it.

Railroad eight-hour day law: Establishing eight hours as the standard for reckoning the compensation of railroad employes operating trains in interstate commerce after January 1, 1917, and providing for a commission of three to investigate the effects of the eight-hour standard, present wage scale not to be reduced during the investigation, nor for thirty days thereafter and work in excess of eight hours to be paid for at a pro rata rate.

Appropriations for all purposes were:

Agriculture	\$ 24,948,852
Army	267,596,530
Diplomatic and consular	5,355,096
District of Columbia	12,841,907
Fortifications	25,748,050
Indian affairs	10,967,644
Legislative and executive	37,925,690
Military academy	1,225,043
Navy	313,300,095
Pensions	158,065,000
Post office	322,937,679
River and harbor	40,598,135
Sundry civil	128,299,285
Permanent appropriations	131,074,673
Shipping bill	50,100,000
Deficiencies	72,500,000
Rural credits	6,100,000
Good roads	6,000,000
Floods	2,000,000

Grand total \$1,637,583,682

For Future Expenditures

In addition to the total there were authorizations for expenditures in future years including, naval, good roads, tariff commission and other expenditures to bring the total to approximately two billion dollars, but these amounts do not properly apply to the appropriations for the fiscal year.

In addition congress enacted an unusually large amount of miscellaneous legislation, including reorganization of the patent office; provision for trial of space system in place of weight system for payment for railroad mail service and leaving to the interstate commerce commission determination of the method and rate of pay; creation of a national park bureau in the department of the interior; establishing warehouse regulations for cotton and grains and providing a new grain grading law; extension for a year of the government war risk insurance bureau; uniform law making bills of lading negotiable.

Proposed legislation which failed of enactment and has gone over until next winter includes the immigration bill; the corrupt practices act

to limit campaign expenditures for election of the president, vice-president and members of congress; a vocational education bill passed by the senate; conservation legislation including the public lands water power bill, the Shields navigable streams water power bill which failed in conference, the oil leasing bill including relief for California oil men; a flood control bill which passed the house; and a bill to establish citizenship for natives of Porto Rico.

Four treaties were ratified by the senate. The most important was the long pending Nicaraguan convention providing for the acquisition of a canal route and naval stations rights in the Bay of Fonseca for \$3,000,000 and that ratified in the closing hours provided for the purchase of the Danish West Indies for \$25,000,000. Another was a treaty with the republic of Hayti, providing for an American financial protectorate. The much disputed pending treaty with Columbia after several years of consideration was favorably reported from the foreign relations committee with an amendment reducing from \$25,000,000 to \$15,000,000 the proposed amount to be paid for the partition of Panama. The treaty, however, was never taken up in the senate because of the unrelenting opposition on the part of many senators and it remains on the calendar. The committee at the time of adjournment still had under consideration the proposed treaty with Great Britain providing for protection of migratory birds on both sides of the Canadian border.

Death claimed four members of the congress during the session: Senators Shively of Indiana, and Burleigh, of Maine, and Representatives Brown and Moss, both of West Virginia. Representative Witherpoon, of Mississippi, died just before the session began.

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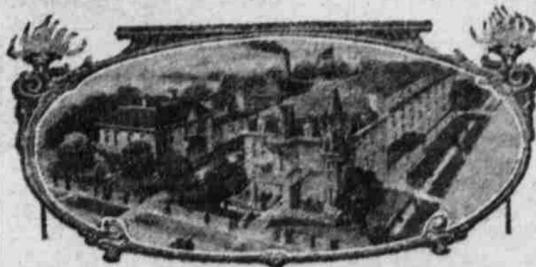
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